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Ministry of Forests and Range

NAK'AZDLI TO RECEIVE $112,500 FOR HISTORIC RESTORATION

FORT ST. JAMES – The Community Development Trust is providing $112,500 to the Nak'azdli Natural Resource and Development Centre to support the restoration of the historic Duzcho Trail, Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell announced today.

"The funding will allow local forestry workers to use their skills to protect an important piece of our province's heritage," said Bell. "As well, by providing bridging employment, it will help keep our skilled workers in Fort St. James for when market conditions recover."

The Nak'azdli estimate the trust's Job Opportunities Program will support six to eight forestry workers to re-establish the Duzcho Trail from Stuart Lake to where the present day Carp Lake Provincial Park campsites are located, adding bridges and interpretive signs. The Duzcho is a section of a historic trade trail that stretches from the Rockies to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. The trail was an established and well-used trading route prior to the first arrival of Europeans in the area in 1804.

"The maintenance and preservation of the Duzcho Trail will serve as an important connection to the area's culture and history," said Chief Fred Sam of the Nak'azdli First Nation. "The re-establishing of the trail has provided us with insight of how communities traded and communicated over 200 years ago, and this funding will contribute to that understanding."

"Any work done to restore and maintain these cultural trails is of great benefit to our community and the entire region," said Fort St. James Mayor Rob MacDougall. "The program will provide income for forestry workers and contribute to the re-establishment of the trail, which encourages and enables residents to follow in the footsteps of our elders and pioneers."

The $26.25-million Job Opportunities Program is targeted at providing short-term employment opportunities in forestry-dependent communities facing economic and social challenges due to the downturn in the forest industry. The program's goals are to reduce the impact of current layoffs and retain skilled forestry workers for the anticipated future upturn.

A forestry-dependent community or organization and forest licensees or forest contractors working in co-operation with a forestry-dependent community are eligible to submit an expression of interest to the Job Opportunities Program. Since the program was announced, 58 submissions have been received.

The Job Opportunities Program is one component of the Community Development Trust, which was announced in May of this year. B.C.'s share of the federal trust is $129 million over three years with funds also directed to a Tuition Assistance program and Transition Assistance for Older Workers program.

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"The Community Development Trust is a new opportunity for towns and cities affected by the downturn in the forest industry," said Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Community Development. "I encourage other communities facing the same challenges to check out the trust and identify projects that would qualify for funding."

For more information about the Community Development Trust and the Job Opportunities Program, please visit www.labour.gov.bc.ca/cdt/.

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